

A  
L E T T E R  
F R O M

Mr *Alexander Sheilds*, Minister to the *Regiment*  
Whereof the late *Noble Earl of ANGLAND*  
was *Colonel*, now in *Flanders* : Directed  
to the *General Assembly of Church*  
*SCOTLAND*, which was to have met  
at *Edinburgh* in *December 1693*.

*Reverend and Dear Brethren*



WHICH hath seemed good to Holy Providence  
time, to Burden our Lot with many gravamen  
Circumstances, while engaged in a Bloody  
exposed to many Hazards and Hardships, Troubles  
and Temptations in a strange Land, A Land of  
ven Images, A Theatre of many deplorable Calami-  
ties and Devastations, imbittered with the Sorrows  
being at such a distance from the benefit of your Counsel and the comfort  
of your Communion. Yet it is no small alay to all our several grieves

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that we have a share of Your Sympathy and  
The assurance of your being willing and ready to assist and en-  
us every way, to the utmost of your Power, and the Confidence  
our favourable acceptance of our addresses for it. Were it not for  
tho' the Cause be very Important, the Necessity very cogent, my  
Inclination and Ambition very earnest, and the desires of others  
more to be valued) very urgent: I should not have presumed (and yet  
not without Blushing) to trouble you with such an Application, and  
set your foot upon such a material Head. But as the neces-  
sity of the case, and the importunity of our best Friends here sensible of it,  
compells me; So the Confidence of your Affection and Zeal for a common  
Interest, Imboldens me humbly to lay before you, that which is requir-  
ed by our King, expected by all our Country Men here, desired by all that  
love our Reformation, And requested by that particular Regiment, which  
depend upon, That it's vacant numbers may be filled up with Recruits of  
people, of the *Presbyterian* persuasion, and of a good Conversation  
answering that Character: And that you may be moved to contribute  
your help and assistance thereto. I humbly propose these considerations.  
I. Tho' War in itself be no desirable thing. Yet in the present con-  
stitution of the World, the management and prosecution of it for a good  
cause, is a good and lawful vocation suitable to Christians, and consistent  
with Piety; and not to be excluded from The *Whatsoever things are  
true, Whatsoever things are Honest, Whatsoever things are just*, that  
Christians are called to think on, and Ministers may encourage them to  
is true indeed the present constitution of our Armies, wherein (through  
the remissness, and backwardness of the Godly to fill them up) few  
Wicked Profligates so abound, to the grief and vexation of the honest or  
that fear God among them, to be Associated with them in Arms, may be  
thought neither pure, free of polluting snates, nor Lovely to them that  
follow their Example, nor of so good Report as to adduce others to a Concur-  
rence. But as this joining in Arms with them for a common Righteous  
Interest (not professedly upon the account of Religion) does not intan-  
dinary Confederacy with persons of a different Religion, in any way  
imports a nearer accession to theirs, or a Recession from any point  
of



of ours, for the advantage of theirs, or to the prejudice of our own, having still absolute freedom, to avouch the Remotest distinction in their principles, and abstraction from their practices and examples; In this station, as well as any other, many have, and any of the Godly may Exercise themselves in keeping a good Conscience, void of offence toward God and Man, and walk and shine as the blameless Sons of God without Repute in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation. For none have more multifarious, or more effectual motives and inducements to be Exercised unto Godliness, than they who are exposed to so many Dangers and Deaths every day; So none do despise these Calls, but such break all Bonds of Divine and humane Laws, and would do so in every Land. It is the multitude of such presumptuous Debauchees that brings an evil Report upon the profession of Arms which deters the Godly from it, & the averseness upon that account makes way for bringing in more profane persons, whose increase in Numbers emboldening them in insolence, proves more and more discouraging to all that would concur, in using endeavour either to fight against the Enemies and repress their Pride, Or to contend against Commilitants and suppress their Profanity. But if those that love Religion, would be stirred up to a suitable Zeal and Ambition to outvie the Wicked in all appearances of forwardness for prosecuting the War, for such a good Interest. It would open a door of hope, both of sooner subduing our Enemies, and repressing their Pride, And of more easily reforming our Armies, and suppressing their Profanity. Sure none can pretend so much obligation to the duty, or title and right to the privilege of being employed in a War so necessary for securing the Interest of Religion as those that by Confession have suffered for it, and by profession and practice maintain the Honour of it: But if all such shall be deterred from our Armies, because of their Profanity, and wasted out of it without being Recruited, then they must all be Profane and Wicked: And if so, what hope of success, and what confidence in praying for it? Divine Sovereignty indeed can give success to a Wicked Army, and more frequently to a Wicked than a good Cause; Yet how can one Pray for this? Forth, when there is no promise for it? And tho' we should Pray in Faith, what do we promise? My Brethren, tho' a Man say he hath Faith



can Faith save him? If a Brother or Sister be Naked and de-  
stitute of daily Food, and one say to him, Depart in peace. Be ye warmed  
and filled, notwithstanding you give them not these things which are  
needful to the Body, What doth it profite? Even so Faith, if it hath no  
works, is Dead: Even so perhaps it may be no impertinent allusion to al-  
lege Praying in Faith for a Wicked Army, without working to make it  
make it better, will not save it. And if an Army or Regiment be called  
and destitute of honest Souldiers to Fight for an honest Cause, and you  
say to the rest only Depart in peace, go on, Fight and prosper. Not-  
withstanding you give them not Recruits, which are needful to the filling  
up of their Body, what doth it profite? In this I plead for nothing but  
what is lawful and also possible, to incite some honest Men to concur,  
in Fighting for a Cause which all honest Men pray for. I hope in Scot-  
land, notwithstanding of the Hundreds that have been destroyed by the fury  
of the Enemies, there is not such paucity of *Presbyterians*, but that  
every Synod (that is planted) could make a Regiment consisting of such if  
there were occasion. And therefore when but One is desired out of all, and  
but a few Recruits to make up that one, it will not be difficult to fulfil the  
desire. It is a thing unessayable indeed to make an Army of Saints, but I  
humbly conceive, it is not so unfeasible to get a Regiment of *Presbyteri-  
ans*, if their Ministers encourage them to it.

II. It is not only lawful and Righteous, but expedient and necessary for  
all that have Zeal for the Glory of God, and good of the Church and Country  
whereof they are Members, the security of the Government and Laws un-  
der which they live a peaceable and quiet Life in all Godliness and honesty,  
not only to wish well, and Pray earnestly for these dearest and most In-  
terests; But also to Act, Contend, and lay themselves out to the utmost of  
their power, to help forward the vigorous prosecution of this War.  
It is so necessary for their preservation, and so clearly and declaredly  
required, not for the petty Intrigues and Ambulations of particular  
Princes, But for the necessary defence of these greatest concerns so emi-  
nently exposed to hazard, and lying at stake, not in Britain and Ireland  
only, but all Europe over, in opposition to the grassmunt prevaugulor-  
tion of the declared Enemies of God and Mankind. The quarrel is  
great



grant is not formally declared for Religion (In that case should the  
Papists would not be so clear, in a War wherein a Religion contended  
theirs must be both our motive, measure and end) but consequential  
both such a near connexion with, and concern in this great and Righteous  
Cause, that if the Enemy be suffered to prevail, all the legal establishment  
of it in our Land and all the Reformed Churches will be utterly subverted  
and reduced to the desolate condition of the Church in *France*: which no  
human deliberation nothing can avert, if there be not a more effectual  
check given to the insolency, and a more universal running to Arms, to  
resist and extinguish the fury of these two Smoking Fire-Brands, that  
threaten the conflagration of *Europe*, and of *Britain* with the first. And  
in such a necessary Cause none should reckon themselves more concerned  
than *Presbyterians*, who know best the worth of these Gracious Interests  
by their long grieving for the want of them, under the late Government.  
And therefore should demonstrate greatest Resolution, to maintain them  
when so far recovered; and who had the greatest hand in Exauctorating the  
late King, and Establishing this Kings Authority in *Scotland*, And there-  
fore should reckon themselves most obliged to oppose the one, and de-  
fend the other: and whose Zeal for Religion and Liberty hath been so  
Eminent and potent, and even to Strangers, That they expect upon this oc-  
casion to find in *Flanders* whole Brigades of Religious Soldiers, And are  
flumbled, when they observe so much Profanity in Officers and Soldi-  
ers and Chaplains too, of so many Scots Regiments, thinking them to be  
all *Presbyterians*, because coming from a Country where *Presbytry* is  
the established order. It will be therefore very necessary and expedient upon  
many accounts, that at least you give your help to the completing of one  
Regiment, that may Answer the Character, and maintain the Honour of  
that name.

III Nor ought it to be misregarded, or forgotten how much all of us  
are obliged in point of gratitude, as well as necessity, to help forward this  
War in this Country, for the more immediate defence of the seven united  
Provinces: which are Reformed Sister Churches, and upon that ac-  
count to be carefully preserved, which ly next to our own, And upon that  
consideration, as an advanced Post to our own Camp, ought to be with

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well concern and Caution defended; which have often afforded  
a Sanctuary of protection to us and others under our persecutions,  
and therefore it is both the least and the best signification of our grateful  
Respect to their Kindnesses, as well as of regard to our own interests, to send  
over some Souldiers to fight in the Frontiers, and keep off the Enemy  
from our own; and which to all their former favours have added one very  
signally and strongly enforcing the obligation. In furnishing us with a  
King, who hath been the Honour and Instrument in the hand of God, of re-  
lieving us from Poperie and Slavery, relieving us from Oppression and  
Persecution, restoring to us *Presbyterian* Government, delivering us  
from the grievous yoke of Prelacy, and of the putting and keeping us in the  
peaceable possession of our Religion, Laws, and Liberties; And there-  
fore both in Conscience, Honour, Loyalty and gratitude, the Subject of  
such a King, especially those that are the most sensible of such fa-  
vours, should be ambitious to outdoe all others in a bold and zealous  
serving him in these Wars, that are so necessary for the preservation of  
these priviledges. Shall the Prelatick party, that cannot be so sensible of  
the good effects of the change of the Government, but rather reckon  
themselves Injured by the Favours bestowed upon us, be so thankfully  
forward in his service, for the Kindnesses extended to them, that they can  
muster so many brave Regiments ready and bold for the War? And  
will not the *Presbyterians*, far more obliged, for all the Kindnesses  
the King has shewn them, do so much as make one Regiment good to  
serve him Abroad, when he requires and expects it? Were not his Con-  
stancy, Justice and Regard to our better Right, greater than the en-  
couragements he gets by any profits of our thankfulness, he might be  
tempted to weary of bestowing favours upon them that will do him so little  
service, and extend them rather to those that profess more forwardness.  
I shall not mention any services that this particular Regiment hath done  
for your Interest and advantage, either at home or Abroad, to merit  
your Kindness, nor the esteem, that the King on the account thereof,  
hath express for People of such a Character and his desire to have it consist  
of such: But I humbly presume the consideration of Gratitude is in any  
ways strongly urgent, that you should lend your hand to make this a good  
Regiment.



IV. Nor is it unworthy of consideration, that your own private advantage, in a prudent respect to probable Events, seems to plead for the same: For not only more remotely may it be thought a promising means with the blessing of God, contributing to the accelerating the overthrow of the public Enemy, and securing the common great interest; But in a nearer prospect, this proof of your Zeal for the King's Service, may be none of the most despicable or desperate means, and as little inconvenient as any you can use, to ingratiate yourself in his favour, and promote your interest at Court: The seeing of this your concernedness to strengthen his Armies, will open his Ears and Heart to your just Requests, will convince his Friends, and give them confidence to appear in your Cause, And stop the Mouth of your undermining Traducers, when they shall have no more occasion to Reproach that you will do the King no Service. And in case of after Revolutions (which all things in time are subject to) or occurring exigences that necessarily require Warlike expeditions, if this Regiment be supplied with honest Recruits, it may be a standing Nursery, for breeding brave Faithful and Zealous Officers and Souldiers, for serving their Majesties: and there will not be afterwards that necessity or Excuse for seeking or admitting profane Malignant and disaffected Men to these publick Charges and Trusts, to which for want of others they have been too commonly advanced, to the great detriment and hindrance of a good Work. It may be therefore expected of your prudence, that you will have some regard to such advantagious Interests, and not always verily that Proverb, to be only wise behind the hand.

V. It will not be impertinent farther to Reflect upon the Honour and Credit that may be in doing of such a piece of Service: which is a Topic that should not only have force with Souldiers but with Ministers and Christians also, *whatsoever things are Lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any Praise, think on these things.* I beseech you therefore, Reverend and Honoured in the Lord be pleased to think on this a little, what a virtue and praise it may be, that the Professors of the true Religion, shall excell the Professors of Profanity, in a forwardness to promote a War that is so Righteous, and necessary for the Interest of it, as much as they do exceed them in zeal to maintain the practice



But ; And how unseemly and absurd it is, that Strangers and Enemies to  
 the practice of Religion, should yet be more ambitious to Fight for the  
 outward Interest of it, than they that protest they cannot live without it.  
 What a Praise and Glory were in the most persecuted *Presbyterians*, who  
 not long ago suffered so much, as *Holmes* and others, who collecting to their Refor-  
 mation and Christian Liberties, and durst not be seen on the Street for  
 fear of Imprisonment and Banishment, Beheading and Hanging, should  
 now appear in the Fields ready and resolute to Fight, for preserving what  
 they suffered for before, and not affrighted nor afraid to speak with their  
 Enemies in the gate. And after having got them in some measure suppressed  
 at Home, should not confine their zeal to the narrow bounds of their  
 own Country, but pursue them Abroad, and extend it against all the  
 Enemies of all the Churches, and then and there make it appear, that the  
 change of their Lot, hath not changed their Life, but that in the midst of  
 a perverse and profane Army, They can be as Blameless, Harmless,  
 and unrebukable in their practice, and Strict, Tender and Tenacious in  
 their Principles and Profession, when they are in a fighting Life, as be-  
 fore when they were in a suffering Life and make it evident to the Convi-  
 ction of the World. That Suffering, and Praying, and Fighting are very  
 Compatible ? And on the other hand, what a shame and Scandal is it, for  
 Eminent Sufferers, either to turn so silly, unconcerned, or Faint hearted,  
 as to keep altogether aloof, from Jeoparding their Lives in the high places  
 of the Fields, and coming out to the *help of the Lord against the mighty*,  
 or so narrow, private, and peevish in their Zeal, as to restrict it to endea-  
 vours for their own security only, and against their nearest and most im-  
 mediat Enemies within their own Land : And that of all the *Presbyteri-  
 ans* in Scotland, whose Zeal and Sufferings, and Actions for Refor-  
 mation, hath been so renowned amongst the Nations, now when there is  
 opportunity for them to arise and shine and make it better known to the  
 World, should no Regiment can be made abroad entirely consisting of  
 such, but that our Troops from Scotland are generally the most ill and  
 profaneest Russians in the Army ; an officer and some few of the *Pa-  
 pists* and *Protestants*, and that particular Regiment should more signally  
 bear that Character amongst them (and if Recruits might maintain the  
 Credit



Credit of it) must either turn to nothing, or degenerate like the rest of the reproach of all. What a Glory and Honour were it, for those who for their adhering to their Religion and Liberties, and wrestling against Tyrants illegal impositions upon their Conferences have been unjustly reproached with Rebellion, and Disaffection to Monarchy, as such that could live under no Government should now as soon as they had got a Government that they might live under, Confute and Confound all flandering Calumnies, by making it appear in their present resolute necessity to promote and prosecute this War, that they could not indeed bear Tyranny, and therefore now are resolved to spend the last drop of their Blood, to withstand its Reintroduction, and that they alwayes longed for a Righteous Government, and therefore will contribute their utmost to its defence, and will sooner part with their lives, than be robbed of it again; and by demonstrating that they as far exceed others in a resolute resisting these Tyrants (against whom the present War is started) as formerly they fell off their fidelity more than others, and that they as far excel all others in a zealous forwardness for the defence of the Government, as they are more obliged than others, to the benefits of it, and did appear before others to oppose the quarrel of it? And on the other hand what a dishonour and disgrace will it be, this toly under these Calumnies, and by your remission to embolden your Adversaries, with open mouth, more and more to say, that the Presbyterians in Scotland, are such despectably weak that they cannot give the King a Regiment to fight him in the Wars abroad, and therefore ought to despise them, as a People that can do him no service, who so perversely wicked, that they can rise in Rebels, and fight against Kings, but for none; Or so disorderly wilful, that they can be Soul-diers at Home, where when they weary they can have access mutinously to desert, but not abroad in a well disciplined Army? And finally what an Honour and Credit, as well as Interest were it, to have a number of honest brave Officers and Soldiers trained up in the Art of War, intirely devoted to the Interest of God; that might upon all occasions, when need required, do their Country eminent and Faithful Service? And on the other hand, what an unaccountable discredit is it, as well as harmful, when ever there is need of Soldiers to be forced to make recourse to ill Principled



and Scandalous men who are both a shame to the Cause, and may be tempted to betray it? I know and will acknowledge, *Much Respected Brethren*, that your Humility, together with your present humbling Difficulties, will not allow you to attend to great things of this Nature, and that (do your best) it is impossible to avoid all reproaches of King's Mouths, but I am so Ambitious as to presume the Recruiting of this Regiment with Presbyterians, will neither reflect upon your Humility nor Honour; but effectually relate several Reproaches.

VI, Unto this I subjoin the many encouragements that may invite & allure Honest Men, which are such as are not alwayes, nor every where common, and without which I durst not take the Confidence to invite them to a Lot and Consortship, commonly so obnoxious to Sins, Sins and Sorrows. Here they may be encouraged, not only to be good Soldiers by the Kings presence and example, but to be good Christians, if they will respect either the Laws of God or the Kings orders. And to encourage the Religious hath used many endeavours to Reformat the Vicious, by dispersing books among them for that end. and by many repeated Proclamations of Edicts for punishing them. And in this Regiment (tho' now much wanted & wanted) they may expect yet a serious & pious Remnant, with whom they may have sweet fellowship in Religious Duties; to which they may also be encouraged by the Kings expressed desire and expectation, that it should be Recruited with such, and by his several ways signifying his respect to us upon that account, in granting diverse Requests, and upon our application, keeping from us some ill Officers, that other ways would have been imputed upon us: He hath now given us the Right Honourable Colonel *Ferguson* to be our Colonel, who is the same Honest Men to fill up the Vacancies of his Regiment, promises upon his word of Honour, and to confirm it by all securities, that if they desire it, he shall give them their Discharge at the end of three Campaigns. I need not add how convenient it will be to have so many together or one beam and way, whereby we need not fear the insultings of any, and what access we may thereby find, to promote good things both among our selves, and others, that otherways we can have no Capacity nor opportunity for, nor how inconvenient it will be, that the King should be disappointed



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pointed, our Officers affronted, our Maligners hands strengthened, and  
Friends more and more weakned

I shall therefore conclude. Begging you will be pleased to consider  
the Premises, and Communicate these or other more engaging perswasives  
to influence some Honest Men to come over with our Officers; Whereby  
you'll do the greatest act of Charity and compassion towards your poor  
unworthy Brother here left alone, as if it were in *Melbeck*, and *Tents*  
*Redoubt*: Which yet by this you shall convert into a little *Zion*, and Encou-  
rage me to Live and Die with these honest *Israelites* that you shall com-  
mend to my Charge, And to endure with all Cheartuiness, all the Fatigue,  
Trouble and Hazards, of these weary Wars. Otherways if I may not ob-  
tain this desire. My next must be. to Beg for the Lords sake, that you  
would relieve me of this Banishment, and allow me to see the Lords Arms  
and Habitation again in my Native Country. In the mean time hoping  
you will please to consider more the weight of what is said, than the unwor-  
thiness of him that says it. And Begging pardon for this presumption and  
boldness, I subscribe myself.

*Respectfull Brother and Father*

Your Son, Brother, Servant,  
and Supplicant,  
Alexander Sheilds.